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FORECAST 
Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity
Across Sectors in Transition

**WORLD LEARNING
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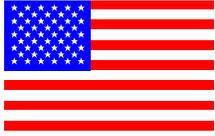
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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.



I. Washington, D.C.

A. Travel

Site visits were made to monitor FORECAST Exchange students at the following universities:

- October 16-17, Danial Pribudagov visited 3 students at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
- November 4, Dorothea Antonio visited 3 students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, Pennsylvania
- November 5, Dorothea Antonio visited 3 students at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania
- December 1-3, Tom Bruey visited 3 students at the University of Maine in Orono, Maine
- December 6, Patricia Howe visited 3 students at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee

B. Meetings, Conferences, and Presentations

- November 6-7, Dorothea Antonio presented at two sessions at the NAFSA: Association of International Educators Regional Conference in Pittsburgh, one on sponsored students and one on professional development opportunities in international education
- January 30-31, Dorothea Antonio participated in the NAFSA Washington Leadership Meeting as a member of the Leadership Development Committee
- February 6, Dorothea Antonio presented at the World Education Services Workshop on Sponsored Students in Washington, DC
- February 12, Colin Davies spoke on a panel at the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) Conference in Washington, DC

- March 1-3, Dorothea Antonio presented a session on Community Colleges and Sponsored Student Programs at the Community Colleges in International Development (CCID) Conference in Orlando.

C. Solution Provider Outreach

- The Resource Center coordinated visits to the FORECAST office from twelve training providers. The meetings focused on institutions' academic majors and programs including English language training, international student services, international communities on and off-campus, experience America activities, issues with international students, training capabilities, proposal writing guidance, and issues of training program management. Visits were made by the following institutions: Juniata College, North Dakota State University, St. Catherine's University, Nazareth College, University of Arkansas, the University of Mississippi, IIE West Coast Center, Syracuse CIV, IIE Denver, IVC Charlotte, IVC Georgia, and the World Trade Center of Charleston.

Field Offices

II. FORECAST/Albania

For information regarding the most recent training/HICD activities for participants from Albania please refer to the status chart in the Appendix.

Success Stories

Please see the Appendix for full details on the following Success Stories:

- Appropriate Technology Helps Expand Sustainable Agribusiness
Thanks to a small grant, the owner of a medicinal plants and essential oils company has adapted appropriate technology and thereby expanded his business and is now exporting. Following the advice of experts he expanded his distillery for essential oils and introduced new oil distiller technologies. He is planning to share his new-found expertise with other oil distillers in Albania.
- USAID Helps Albania Pediatricians to Have Clinical Practice Guidelines
The most recent conference of the Albania Pediatric Society produced written clinical practice guidelines. These have been published and distributed to pediatricians all over the country, giving doctors alternatives if one treatment is unavailable or impossible.
- Students Enlisted to Tackle Domestic Violence
Law students have received training from an NGO, the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives, in how to offer legal counseling and assistance in cases of domestic violence. The students attended workshops in rural areas explaining the law. A TV advertisement on the subject, supported by the grant, resulted in a huge increase in the numbers of women seeking assistance.

Staffing

- Brittany Lynk continued a two-month part-time internship focusing on success stories and especially photography for stories.
- Edi Bregu, new Finance/Admin Officer, did not pass the probation period, so Ermira Shehi performed the work of Finance/Admin Officer temporarily in November/December.
- Ilir Hasani returned in January after two years in Kosovo to take the position of Finance/Admin Officer. He also offers IT support.

Media Coverage

- TV UFO in Durres broadcast several times a day during October the spot produced through a FORECAST small grant to the Center for Civic Legal Initiatives regarding assistance for domestic violence.
- News of the USAID-supported Albanian Pediatricians Conference held November 14-15 was broadcast by TVSH, Klan, Alsat, News24, Vision Plus, and Koha TV.
- News of the USAID-funded small grant to provide job training to unemployed youth in Korca was broadcast December 16 on local TV stations (TV Korca, TV Magic, LOBI TV) and Dec 17 on TV Korca. An article regarding this initiative also appeared in the local newspaper *Vezhduesi*.
- News of the USAID-funded small grant to raise awareness among marginalized rural women in Elbasan was broadcast on local Egnatia TV on December 20. An article also appeared in the local weekly newspaper *Java* on December 27.
- News of the USAID-funded small grant to provide job training to unemployed youth in Korca, this time for the mock interviews, was broadcast in January on all the local TV stations (TV Korca, TV Magic, LOBI TV).
- For “Where Are They Now,” Mr. Admir Thanza, a participant who most recently attended US training in Judicial Reform in September 2008, was appointed to the Constitutional Court.
- News regarding the Women’s Empowerment Workshops in Rreshen was broadcast on News 24 dhe TV Lezha.

Third Country Training

- Two participants attended the 13th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Athens, and one was involved in presenting at the conference, October 25 – November 3, and October 29 – November 3.

In-Country Training and Technical Assistance

- Support was provided to the Albanian Agro-Business Council (KASH) to organize an Agro-Tourism Fair in the city of Korca October 10 for approximately 160 farmers and 40 agro-businessmen.
- The Albanian Pediatric Association held its annual conference November 14-15 with nearly 350 participants, including 80 from Kosovo and 35 from Macedonia. As well as the 35 oral presentations and 20 poster presentations, a symposium was held for the first time on the role of pediatricians regarding family planning, a special initiative of USAID.
- Twelve proposals were reviewed and evaluated in the process of procuring the intervention provider for a large in-country Women’s Empowerment Project which will take place

January through June 2009 and include the making and broadcasting of six documentaries. The local organization Refleksione was selected. Implementation started with the first three workshops taking place and the scenario and filming for the first documentary.

- Preparations began and continued for a technical assistance program whereby articles already prepared under the Religious Harmony Project would be revised and published as a book. Implementation continued for the publication with the approval of the Albanian articles and the start of their translation into English.
- Technical Assistance support to the Council of Ministers, Dept. of Strategy and Donor Coordination to assist with the implementation the Integrated Planning System began implementation with seven days of assistance.
- Preparations began for the 2008 Albanian Trade Report and Report launching.
- A half day workshop on new Building Code Regulations as they pertain to people with disabilities was held on February 12, with 80 officials and specialists in attendance.
- Preparations continued to bring in two US experts to provide training in assets hiding and conflict of interest investigation.
- Support to the June 28, 2009 elections continued with
 - World Learning/Albania receiving a £90,000 grant from the British Embassy to cover about half the cost of hiring two local polling organizations and a polling expert to hold four polls. The first poll was held the end of March with release of results planned for April.
 - Hiring of the two local polling organizations
 - Preparations to engage a local organization for parallel vote tabulation,
 - Preparations to engage a local organization for media bias monitoring

Small Grants and Other Follow-On Activities

- A grant to support entrepreneurial training and employment among marginalized youth in Korca continued implementation.
- A grant to provide Information Technology to the Agricultural University of Tirana was approved.
- A grant to support the work of the anti-trafficking shelter in Vlore, VATRA, was approved.
- A grant to renovate a building as a museum in the village of Rehova in order to attract tourists began implementation.
- A fifth grant to ARSIS for the Street Children Center in Tirana to assist vulnerable children to attend and succeed in school and develop other life skills especially by focusing on community outreach continued implementation.
- A grant to assist with solid waste collection in Rubik completed implementation despite the lack of a landfill. The dumpsters, each with a public announcement sign, are being stored in a warehouse as they are too difficult to empty without the truck that will be rented when the landfill is completed.

- A grant to support the efforts of the disabilities and development coalition continued implementation.
- A grant to support a Junior Achievement business skills and enterprise competition among eight university faculties continued implementation.
- A grant to support the Different and Equal Shelter to assist women victims of trafficking and their children with reintegration completed implementation.
- A fourth grant to ARSIS for the Street Children Center in Tirana to assist children to attend and succeed in school especially by focusing on alternative income generation for the parents completed implementation.
- A grant to raise the awareness of women, especially minorities, in 3 communes of Elbasan regarding family planning completed implementation.
- Guidance was offered to participants interested in applying for grants for tour-guide training, child protection activities, local economic growth, junior achievement activities, youth workforce development in Vlore, school renovation in Rreshen, child protection activities, municipal council renovation in Rreshen, shelters for victims of trafficking, promotion of proper wild herb collection in Elbasan, Internet connection in Xare in the district of Sarande, and Agricultural Fair activities in Berat.

Noteworthy Events

- The Human and Institutional Capacity Development Plan for FY09 was approved by the Mission in December. It includes 31 programs plus possibilities for small grants. Of the 31 programs, only two are tailored third country training programs. No US training is foreseen. Most are in-country technical assistance or training.
- January 15, Program Officer Jugera Ibrahim and Project Director Matty Thimm paid a monitoring visit to the Different and Equal Shelter to meet the staff and women/girl victims of trafficking and their children who are being assisted with reintegration through this grant.
- February 4, Jugera Ibrahim and Matty Thimm attended the first Women's Empowerment Workshop in Shkoder. After the first workshop it was decided to make smaller discussion groups and invite people to come with concrete stories.
- February 11, Jugera Ibrahim attended the second Women's Empowerment Workshop in Vlore.
- February 18, Jugera Ibrahim attended the third Women's Empowerment Workshop in Berat.
- March 4, Jugera Ibrahim and Matty Thimm attended the fourth Women's Empowerment Workshop in Rreshen. The USAID Mission Director, Roberta Mahoney, also attended the workshop briefly, noting how much energy was generated during the discussions.

- March 12, Jugera Ibrahim attended the fifth Women’s Empowerment Workshop in Pogradec.
- March 20, Jugera Ibrahim attended the six Women’s Empowerment Workshop in Gjirokaster.
- March 27, USAID Mission Director, Roberta Mahoney, accompanied by USAID Program Officer John Brannaman and Program Specialist responsible for FORECAST Jonilda Alikaj, visited the World Learning/FORECAST office to learn about the program and meet the staff.

Cost-Saving Measures

- \$1,023 was saved in VAT reimbursements for office administration and \$2,946 was saved in VAT reimbursements for programs for a subtotal of \$3,969 in VAT reimbursements received.
- \$10,270 was saved by negotiating costs for the program in Parallel Vote Tabulation.
- \$33,850 was saved by negotiating costs for the technical assistance activity related to the International Polling Expert.
- \$500 was saved by negotiating costs for the third-country program in Wheelchair Factory Training in Romania.
- \$1763 was saved in VAT reimbursements associated with the in-country Pediatric Conference in November.

Total Cost Savings.....\$50,352

III. FORECAST/Kosovo

For information regarding the most recent training/HICD activities for participants from Kosovo please refer to the status chart in the Appendix.

Success Stories

Please see the Appendix for full details on the following Success Stories:

- Public Debates Hold New Mayors to Campaign Promises
A local NGO followed up the local elections with a series of televised debates, giving citizens the opportunity to check on the various promises made by mayors during their campaigns. This

resulted in the immediate implementation of certain promised activities, including road repairs and school equipment purchases.

- After School English and Computer Classes Start at Kamenicë/a-Area School

A new computer lab has been opened, that will provide after-school computer and English language classes for 80 students at a technical school. New furniture was supplied, and support will be given to the teachers leading these classes. This is part of a program to provide training and study opportunities for Kosovars in many areas.

- U.S. Soldiers Train Teachers on Classroom Management

A workshop on classroom management was organized for 25 primary school teachers and administrators. Some of the trainers are members of the US army, and so the program helped to build relationships between the military – KFOR - and local school staff.

Staffing

- Matt Brown, who will replace Megan Falvey as World Learning Kosovo Country Director in November, was in Kosovo October 14, 15 & 16 to meet with World Learning and USAID staff.
- Megan Falvey departed in November and was replaced by Matt Brown.

Media Coverage

- The Excellence in Public Service Scholarship Program was highlighted in the October 15 issue of USAID Kosovo's E-News.
- The Community Service Through Extracurricular Activity program was highlighted in the February 24 issue of USAID Kosovo's E-News (see page 2 of the newsletter, found in Appendix C)
- The March 27 edition of the daily newspaper *Express* reported on the USAID FORECAST Excellence in Public Service Scholarship Program

Third Country Training

- Oracle Training 11g: Administration Workshop 1, took place in Tirana, Albania, November 24–28, with 3 participants. This was a follow-up to an in-country training program on the same topic that took place earlier this year.

- Oracle Database 11g: Administration Workshop II was attended by three participants from the Kosovo Tax Administration IT department in Tirana, Albania, February 23–27. The goal of the training was to provide the Kosovo Tax Administration IT Programmers with the skills necessary to develop reports and to make modifications to the SIGTAS system. The training provider was “CACTUS” Albania.
- Balkans Reality: Cooperative Learning and Advocacy for Kosovar Youth Activists (an interethnic conflict resolution workshop) was held in Ohrid, Macedonia, February 27-March 7, for five Kosovo citizens – including ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs – who have been participating in an initiative called CooperaTiVa. The initiative is funded by the US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED). CooperaTiVa was a reality TV show in 6 episodes that challenged two inter-ethnic teams to work together on carefully designed tasks. The FORECAST-funded workshop addressed the needs for the participants to become familiar with conflict resolution techniques as well as existing networks so that their work on the show can continue more effectively in their communities and beyond.

In-Country Training and Follow-On Activities

- Through a Teacher Outreach Workshop with KFOR, World Learning implemented a workshop for approximately 25 educators, from a mix of Albanian and Serbian schools that emphasized US classroom management and the principles and practices of selected US secondary and primary school work. The lecturers were KFOR soldiers that had a background in education. The workshop was highlighted in the March 12 issue of USAID Kosovo’s E-News (see page 2 of Appendix D).

HICD and Other Activities

- Excellence in Public Service Scholarship Program
During October, World Learning conducted outreach for the Excellence in Public Service Scholarship program. The Program will provide scholarships for approximately 100 career civil servants to complete a Masters in Professional Studies at the American University in Kosovo (AUK). USAID has contributed an additional \$1 million for FY 2009 to the World Learning-Kosovo budget for the program (and will contribute another \$1 million for the program in FY 2010).

During October, World Learning staff met with staff from at least twenty ministries, the Assembly, the President’s Office; and the Prime Minister’s Office to discuss the program. Nominee lists from the Ministries, the President’s Office, the Assembly and the Prime

Minister's Office were due November 27, 2008. 17 Kosovo institutions submitted lists of nominees with a total of 147 civil servants by the deadline. The application process was completed in December and the first cohort of students began studying in early 2009.

The orientation meeting with the first cohort took place on January 16. USAID Program Office representatives, Peter Duffy and Antigona Mustafa joined by WL staff, participated in the meeting that was organized and directed by American University in Kosovo (AUK) and their academic partner Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) representatives. Mr. William Walker, the AUK board member, welcomed students on behalf of AUK and Mr. Duffy of USAID wished them success and emphasized the importance of the program for the Kosovo public administration. Students were informed about the program structure, module time table and also logged into the RIT system.

Extra English language preparatory courses began for students that did not quite meet the TOEFL exam requirement. One group of 27 students is currently enrolled in English, and two additional groups are being prepared to start in May 2009.

Announcements for the second round of the program were made during March. A WL representative together with USAID and AUK representatives met with more than 20 Kosovo government institution officials to announce the program. The deadline for institutions submitting applications to WL is April 13.

- Performance Improvement & Digitalization Project at University of Prishtina
During October, the IT solutions company Pronet submitted a draft tender document for procurement of a university administration software package at the University of Prishtina. The draft document was reviewed by USAID, World Learning and external consultant Doug Krause. The tender for the university software was sent to selected prospective suppliers in March. More than 40 questions were submitted by the suppliers by the March 24 deadline.
- Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program
During October, classes started in three Serbian high schools in Verbovc; Lapje Selo; and Susica. Expansion of the program to two more Serbian high schools in Kamenica and Gusterica is underway. Three computers were stolen from the Viti high school computer lab. USAID and the police were informed about the theft. As of the end of October, the program is active in 12 high schools and provides English language and computer instruction to more than 900 students.

During November, extracurricular classes in computers and English continued in Serbian and Albanian high schools. A field visit to new sites took place and two new Serbian schools were selected – in Gusterica and Kamenica. The signing of the contracts with the schools is expected to take place during January 2009.

The field visit by Antigona Mustafa, USAID, and WL staff Fatmir Salihu to a new Serbian selected school in Ropotovo, Municipality of Kamenica, took place. The goal of the visit was the contract signing between the school and WL. Work at the school will begin in February.

During February, extracurricular classes in computers and English language continued. A field visit to schools in Shterpce, Kacanik, Decan and Istog took place during February joined by Antigona Mustafa of USAID. The authorities of the Kacanik School expressed their willingness to continue with the program and also the enthusiasm of the students to be part of these clubs.

During March, extracurricular classes in computers and English continued. Field visits took place in many of the schools.

- Education for Peace Scholarship Program

World Learning Kosovo continues to support the work of the Tony Beslimi Foundation. The Foundation currently administers 11 scholarships for Kosovar citizens at the Texas Lutheran University and provides information to Kosovar high school graduates about the possibilities for university study in the USA.

During October, the Foundation identified 25 universities in the US and Canada which the Foundation will contact to solicit additional scholarships in the coming months. The Foundation also worked with ETS in the US in an effort to establish GRE testing in Kosovo (work on this effort is still on-going). During February the TBG prepared a brochure that will serve as a main advertising and information tool about the Education for Peace Scholarship Program. The intention of the TBG is to distribute this brochure during Education USA info sessions which are planned to be held in several Kosova High Schools, in the near future. The same brochure will be included in the packet that will be mailed to some of the US Universities requesting them to join the Education for Peace Scholarship Program. World Learning support focuses on the foundation's administration and outreach efforts.

During March, the Toni Bislimi Foundation and the Education for Peace Scholarship (EFP) Program prepared the packages that will be sent to several universities in the US and Canada, asking them to join the EFP Scholarship Program. Contacts were established with key private sector companies in Kosovo that could help sponsor (by providing grants to cover living expenses) the future EFP students. March also marked the beginning of the Education USA Info Sessions that took place in several high schools throughout Kosovo. An average of 50 high school students took part in each session. The sessions were tailored to inform current seniors about the possibilities and requirements of studying abroad, with a focus on studying in the US.

- Support for Nasa Kuca Office Network project
The project ended in December. WL provided support to maintain five offices of the Nasa Kuca NGO. The Nasa Kuca offices in Vrbovac, Partes, Strpce, Ranilug and Plemetina organized the following activities; provided internet and computer access to the public; provided informational materials on status issues to the public (relevant laws, regulations, updates etc), and, provided assistance and support in conducting polling & questionnaire activities on the public's perception of the Law on Local Self-Government, particularly on the rights of communities and decentralization.
- Kosovo Perspectives Weekly Bulletin
World Learning continues to support publication and distribution of the Kosovo Perspectives Weekly Bulletin. The Bulletin provides fact-based, relevant news on important issues surrounding status to 15 news & media outlets in minority areas in Kosovo.
- Supporting Youth in Gracanica
During October, activities included English language and computer courses organized twice per week for 10 students; excursions for about 40 youths to visit Pecka Patrijarsija and Decan monasteries; and training for 15 participants in CV development/applying for a job.
- Tutoring Program at Eqrem Qabej High School
World Learning continued support of a one-on-one tutoring program for 10 students at Eqrem Qabej high school in Pristina. The 10 students are tutored in English language twice per week by students from the American University in Kosovo. In November the students prepared for an HIV/AIDS awareness presentation to be delivered in English during December as part of World AIDS Month.
- Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)
At the request of USAID, World Learning is providing financial support to the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) to hold televised debates with 27 mayors who took their posts starting in 2007. The debates will focus on what the 27 mayors promised their respective municipalities when they were running for office and to what extent they have fulfilled their campaign promises. As of October, BIRN organized televised debates with the mayors from Podujeve; Drenas; Ferizaj; Gjakova; Gjilan; Kacanik; Kamenica; Malishevo; Peja; Viti; and Rahovec. The debates were televised on Kosovo's state TV channel, RTK.
- Politicum
Preparation for the second of two issues of the Student Political Science Association Magazine *Politicum* is underway. It is anticipated that the second issue will be published and distributed in November.

- Medical Books for KFOR
As part of USAID's cooperation with and support for the US peacekeeping mission as part of the UN Kosovo Force (KFOR), World Learning helped purchase medical books to be used in KFOR outreach workshops for civilian doctors. The books arrived in November and a series of community workshops began.

Noteworthy Events

- October 15, Country Director Megan Falvey presented World Learning Kosovo's activities to the new USAID Mission Director, Ms. Patricia Rader.
- November 27, WL staff Aferdita Mekuli and Fatmir Salihu joined USAID representatives Peter Duffy and Antigona Mustafa on a daytrip to Kamenica to celebrate the "school day" of Ismail Qemali High School. The school is included in FORECAST's Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program.
- World Learning continues to support a one-on-one tutoring program that pairs 10 American University in Kosovo students with English language pupils at Eqrem Qabej high school in Pristina. On December 5, as an unplanned result of this program, a presentation on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment took place at AUK in connection with AIDS month. The presenters (all in English) were the AUK and Eqrem Qabej students. The audience included approximately 100 students and pupils, as well as representatives from USAID, the US Embassy and WL. A similar initiative is expected in 2009 in connection with drug awareness day.
- December 10, Matt Brown and Fatmir Salihu (WL) conducted a monitoring visit to Ismail Qemali high school in Kamenica – to observe a computer class under the FORECAST Community Service through Extracurricular Activity program and to deliver heaters to the classroom.
- January 8, WL Kosovo staff traveled to Skopje, Macedonia to pick up 5 boxes with 87 books delivered by WL/DC as part of the Law Library project. The aim of this project is training library staff, expanding the IT capacity and enriching the collection with approximately 300 books.
- February 5, Antigona Mustafa of USAID and WL staff, Matt Brown and Fatmir Salihu, participated in the opening of the computer and English Language clubs in the High Technical School in Ropotovo, Municipality of Kamenica. The school is supported with the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program.

- March 11, Matt Brown participated in a meeting on outreach in non-minority areas. The meetings was organized by USAID and hosted at the Grachanica offices of AED on the occasion of the opening of their new USAID-funded minorities support program. The Deputy Director and Program Officer of USAID presented and took questions and suggestions about their emerging minorities strategy, and AED presented its program.
- March 11, WL representatives made a visit to the Partes Community Center to monitor an English Language class, part of the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program.
- March 12, Matt Brown met with USAID program officer and other USAID representatives for a review of current and planned FORECAST activities.
- March 13, WL staff Mehrije Nagavci and Melita Cacaj made a visit to Laplje Selo (with Matt Brown) to monitor the high school's English Language club that is part of the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program.
- March 17 Matt Brown attended a USAID meeting about anti-terrorism security measures related to selection of partners and participants.
- March 17, Aferdita Mekuli and Matt Brown met with an American University in Kosovo representative and Antigona Mustafa from USAID to discuss the rollout of the second round of AUK Masters Scholarships.
- March 18, Matt Brown and Mehrije Nagavci visited the high school in Lipjan to monitor the English Language club, and also visited the nearby Gusterica high school to discuss progress on renovation of the classroom dedicated for English and Computer clubs.
- March 19, Antigona Mustafa USAID and WL staff (Matt Brown, Mehrije Nagavci and Aferdita Mekuli) made a visit to schools in Verboc and Viti to monitor the computer and English Language clubs that are part of the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program.
- March 20, Matt Brown and Fatmir Salihu visited schools in Ferizaj and Shterpce as part of the same monitoring efforts mentioned above.
- March 25 and 31, Aferdita Mekuli (WL), Antigona Mustafa (USAID) and an AUK representative met with government officials, mostly at the Deputy Minister level, in more than 20 individual meetings to inform them about the second round of nominations for Excellence in Public Service Masters Program scholarships.

- March 30, Matt Brown participated in a round table dinner-discussion with AUK masters program scholars, with representatives of the US State Department and USAID.
- March 31, Aferdita Mekuli (WL), Antigona Mustafa (USAID) and Ms. Lendita Rugova of AUK met with the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Finance and Economy to discuss the Excellence in Public Service Masters program.
- March 31, Matt Brown and Fatmir Salihu (WL) met with University of Prishtina Vice Rector for Finance and Infrastructure and other budget department representatives to clarify questions regarding FORECAST software procurement for the University.

Cost Saving Measures

- \$145 was saved as a result of in-house translation of documents for the University of Prishtina web site.

Total Cost Savings.....\$145

IV. FORECAST/Serbia and Montenegro

Success Stories

Please see the Appendix for full details on the following Success Stories:

- Bridging Two Countries and Several Cultures

A student from a small town in northern Serbia spent a year at the University of Alabama under the FORECAST Exchange Program. Upon his return he helped organize a homecoming event, to share his experiences and let people in his town know about other exchange opportunities. The president of the municipality and many local citizens officially welcomed him back.

Staffing

- Milan Devetak resigned on December 12 and was replaced by Duska Stanistic as Program and Office Assistant on January 5.
- Program Coordinator Nadja Bulat went on maternity leave unexpectedly on January 16. Natalija Ostojic (FORECAST Exchange participant in 2007-2008) was temporarily hired for

two months to assist the other staff in covering Nadja's work since the length of her leave was not immediately determined.

Media Coverage

- Three articles appeared in the Montenegrin media related to FORECAST Exchange from recruiting trips in October and WL staff appeared on a morning cable show in Montenegro on October 10 with FORECAST Exchange alumni from Montenegro.
- Several presentations in November were covered by the press for the FORECAST Exchange program in various parts of Serbia in Novi Pazar (2) in Montenegro (6) in Kraguevac (2), Vranje (2) and student TV from the University of Belgrade came to the WL office and taped several vignettes with WL staff and alumni that will be shown at various times to the university students in dormitories (@5000 students). The University is creating a DVD for WL use in recruiting.
- WL staff appeared on student television of the University of Belgrade on December 8, and student television covered a recruiting presentation at the American Corner on December 9. WL outreach efforts were also covered by the print media *Vecernje Novosti* (the Vojvodina edition) during the presentation at the American Corner in Novi Sad.
- Snezana Mijatovic, Mary Fran Doyle, and two alumni from 2007-2008 were on the B92 morning TV show to talk about the FORECAST Exchange Program and to alert applicants to submit their applications before the deadline. The appearance was widely seen and reviewed positively at the Embassy.
- An article comparing university study in Serbia and in the U.S. quotes two current FORECAST Exchange students, Slobodan Milenković (Political Science at East Tennessee State) and Jovana Gigov (English at Slippery Rock University). The article appeared in *Danas*, one of the most widely circulated dailies in Serbia on February 1.

FORECAST Exchange

- In October, WL staff met with Embassy staff Susan Delja and Vukica Stankovic to plan for upcoming events for the FORECAST Exchange Program, to agree on procedures related to recruitment and selection for the year, and to determine the Embassy's level of involvement in the process.
- Snezana Mijatovic of WL was asked by the US Embassy to represent them at a regional conference on the funding of higher education in Croatia in October, which she did.

- WL staff traveled to Montenegro October 8-10 to recruit for the FORECAST Exchange Program and meet with the new PAO Alexander Titolo, explain the program to him, discuss procedures, his level of involvement, and possibilities of additional funding for the program. Additional meetings included the Vice-Rector of the University of Montenegro, some faculty members, deans, and international relations people of various faculties as well as several presentations at various faculties in Podgorica, Niksic, and Kotor and the American Corner in Podgorica. The University of Montenegro posted all of the program's promotional materials on their website and suggested a return visit in November for an information day that they would arrange. At almost every presentation, alumni from 2007-2008 were present and talked with students about their experiences and encouraged them to apply. Several alumni have received EU scholarships to continue their studies and two have graduated and are working.
- In October, WL staff met with the Vice-Rector of the University of Belgrade who is very supportive of the program. He arranged for our materials to be posted on the university website as well as sending emails to all faculties about a presentation at the Rectorate later in the month, which was accomplished along with alumni from the program.
- At the request of the Public Affairs Department, WL staff participated in their booth at the International Bookfair in Belgrade several times during the week of October 20 and talked about FORECAST Exchange. WL staff also conducted a presentation at the American Corner in Belgrade with program alumni and at the National Democratic Institute to their youth volunteers.
- During November, WL staff traveled extensively in Serbia and in Montenegro recruiting students for the FORECAST Exchange Program. In addition to the University of Belgrade, staff visited Novi Sad, Nis, Vranje, Novi Pazar and Kraguevac making different presentations at the faculties and universities and in American Corners. At many of these presentations, program alumni accompanied staff and some have done presentations at their faculties. Vukica Stankovic from the Public Affairs Office traveled with WL to Novi Pazar and Nis. WL also made a presentation at the University of Singidunum, a private university in Belgrade and met with the Assistant Dean. An information day was held at the university in Montenegro, another American Corner presentation, and one in Cetinje. WL staff met with Alexander Titolo, the Public Affairs Officer of the Embassy, and worked out the details of the selection process. WL arranged with the American Corner to be able to use their facility to collect applications.
- The selection process for FORECAST Exchange Students in Montenegro was facilitated by Mary Fran Doyle and Snezana Mijatovic. 30 students were interviewed and 6 finalists and 8 alternates were chosen by the Selection Committees in Montenegro. The PAO for Montenegro, Alexander Titolo, requested additional funds and therefore additional students

- All students were scheduled to sit for the TOEFL exam in March. WL was fortunate to have the cooperation of Elizabeth Chung, the Director of the International Academic Center, in scheduling 4 new tests with ETS for the students since there were not sufficient places available for them in March in already programmed dates. This is the first time that has been possible and resulted in considerable savings for the program in not having to bus the students to other locations, and it ensures that all of them would be tested in March.
- During March all FORECAST Exchange students took the TOEFL exam and all students who were finalists at the time were assigned to various universities in the United States. WL asked all students to submit court certificates in order to be able to conduct the Security Risk and Fraud Inquiry for their J-1 visas. WL received preliminary results for students who took the TOEFL IBT exam and all passed. Results for the PBT are pending.
- In March, Mary Fran Doyle, Snezana Mijatovic, and Nevena Drakulic met with Roslyn Waters-Jensen and Ramsey Day, the new OIC in Montenegro, in order to explain the history of participant training under WL in Montenegro, the FORECAST Exchange Program, and to discuss the re-entry seminar and PDO for their students. After considerable consultation with a variety of parties involved, a compromise was achieved that would allow the re-entry to happen in Belgrade for both groups in 2009, a separate meeting in Montenegro for those alumni from 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 and new students for 2009-2010, and the re-entry for all students from 2009-2010 in Montenegro in 2010.
- Planning for the re-entry seminar, the pre-departure orientation and the booking of Montenegrin students' return flights from Belgrade to Montenegro at the completion of their program in the U.S. is all underway.

FORECAST staff did considerable legwork to choose and confirm a location for the PDO this year given the University Olympics taking place in Belgrade at the same time. They also set up a Facebook link for all alumni, prospective students, and others and some professors in the US and in Serbia have also visited. All 2007-2008 alumni were contacted by WL staff to check on their progress and to see about possible success stories.

Noteworthy Events

- In October, WL compiled the input received from USAID implementers that they sent to their CTOs into the projected USAID Annual Training Plan for 2008-2009 and submitted it to Sanja Nikolin, USAID Activity Manager, as requested.
- In December, at the request of IREX and their CTO, Mary Fran and Nadja Bulat visited the new IREX offices and project where WL provided IREX with an orientation to participant training program procedures in Serbia. The session was attended by IREX COP Richard McClear and two other staff.
- In January, Mary Fran Doyle met with the new interim director of ABACEELI, Sonia Smith, to orient her on training procedures and to try to recover training data that may have been missed previously since this project will close in February.
- In January, Mary Fran Doyle met with DMD Marilyn Schmidt, Roslyn Waters-Jensen, and others to examine the Mission policy for third country geographic waivers. A preliminary procedure was established and DMD Schmidt agreed to refine the procedure further.
- In February, Mary Fran Doyle met with the new COP and Deputy COP of the Agribusiness Project and some of their staff to orient them to the participant training procedures of the Mission.
- In February, Mary Fran Doyle and Snezana Mijatovic met with PAO Conrad Turner and his staff and American Council staff about a possible mentoring program for A-SMYLE students by FORECAST students and other State Department program alumni and possible mentoring of FORECAST students as well.
- In March, Mary Fran Doyle met with Deputy Mission Director Marilyn Schmidt and PAO Conrad Turner, Jill Benderly from SIT and her guests Scott Leroy from Princeton and Svetlana Kijevcanin, the new WL Director of the Princeton Program in Serbia, to let USAID and PD know about a new program that World Learning is implementing in Serbia. While not directly related to FORECAST, there is potential for significant interface between programs and it has attracted interest at the Embassy.

Cost Savings

- \$2,049 was saved in VAT reimbursements and by sharing transportation with the US Embassy for recruitment trips in Serbia.

Total Cost Savings.....\$2,049

V. APPENDIX

- A. Intervention Status Report – October 2008-March 2009
- B. Success Stories for October 2008-March 2009
- C. USAID Kosovo E-News, February 24, 2009 issue
- D. USAID Kosovo E-News, March 12, 2009 issue

APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION STATUS - NEW STARTS - OCTOBER 2008-MARCH 2009

	UST	TCT	ICT	TA	Small Grants	EMT	Academic	Partnerships	HICD Activities	TOTALS
Number of Interventions										
Albania - period	0	1	0	10	4	0	0	0	0	15
cumulative	21	22	15	23	32	0	0	0	0	113
Bosnia-Herzegovina - period	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
cumulative	6	26	5	1	3	0	0	0	2	43
Croatia - period	0	0	0	0	0					0
cumulative	4	6	3	10	0					23
Kosovo - period	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	6
cumulative	2	17	8	32	0	0	3	0	16	78
Montenegro - period	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
cumulative	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	19
Serbia - period	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
cumulative	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	0	0	57
Regional - period	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
cumulative	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTALS - period	0	2	1	12	4	0	2	0	0	21
cumulative	33	72	31	66	35	0	79	0	18	334
Number of Participants (if applicable)										
Albania - period	0	2	0	641	n/a					643
cumulative	129	171	1667	684	n/a					2651
Bosnia-Herzegovina - period	0	0	0	n/a	n/a				n/a	0
cumulative	29	264	1918	n/a	n/a				n/a	2211
Croatia - period	0	0	0	n/a	n/a					0
cumulative	9	40	110	n/a	n/a					159
Kosovo - period	0	5	0	n/a			20		n/a	25
cumulative	21	145	67	n/a			23		n/a	256
Montenegro - period	0	0	0	0			0			0
cumulative	0	0	0	0			19			19
Serbia - period	0	0	0	0			0			0
cumulative	0	0	0	0			57			57
Regional - period	0	0	0	0						0
cumulative	0	58	0	0						58
TOTALS - period	0	7	0	641			20			668
cumulative	188	678	3762	684			99			5411

APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION STATUS - NEW STARTS - OCTOBER 2008-MARCH 2009

Appendix B
FORECAST Semi-Annual Report
October 2008-March 2009
World Learning Success Stories

Albania

Appropriate Technology Helps Expand Sustainable Agribusiness

Albanian essential oils company finds cost-effective technology for the benefit of all

From humble business beginnings buying and selling blueberries in 1993, Xhevit Hysenaj, owner and mastermind of *Xherdo: Medicinal Plants and Essential Oils*, is now dealing in numerous berries, herbs, and oils. He has not only successfully tapped into the Albanian and export market; but he has also been pivotal in adapting technology, as well as promoting his product: essential oils.

Mr. Hysenaj is more than a business man; he is an innovator. While developing his product, he realized that larger essential oil distillers were needed to increase production and make the process more efficient and cost-effective. Research into foreign oil distillers returned only impossibly high price quotes for quality distillers; affordable distillers were of unacceptably low quality. Sustainability, efficiency, and economic sense made it clear to Hysenaj that the best thing to do was adapt the technology himself in a way that would fit his company's needs as well as further empowering Albania's agribusiness industry through more specialized machinery. With the help of a small grant from USAID, Hysenaj was able to bring in three engineers to advise on the design, construction, and operation of a larger capacity, cost-effective distiller for essential oils. He saved a great deal of money making the equipment in Albania, while also developing appropriate oil distiller technology. With this newly adapted technology, production is greater, which has led to more local employment, coupled with increased income for growers and collectors.

With the first prototype of the distiller designed and operating, further improvements are being explored and tested. Once the design is perfected, Hysenaj hopes to consolidate and document the knowledge in a manual, to be made available to other essential oil distillers in Albania.

Thanks to the help of USAID in conjunction with Xhevit Hysenaj's creativity and motivation to grow his business, an important national agribusiness industry that generates income for thousands has taken a step forward.

“Thanks to USAID, we were able to design, construct, and put into operation a cost-effective distiller for essential oils.”

Albania

USAID Helps Albania Pediatricians to Have Clinical Practice Guidelines

Publication by Albanian pediatricians enables doctors in distant cities to provide better treatment

The Challenge: Infant mortality in Albania, at 15 per 1000 births, is three times that of other European countries. Pediatricians throughout Albania often face the daunting task of diagnosing and treating various children's ailments without the proper equipment or medical supplies. Moreover, physicians in different districts sometimes treat the same illnesses differently. Treatment guidelines have existed, but have not been obligatory. In the absence of clear and unified guidelines, sick children have not always received the best treatment. Lacking the proper medicine, some doctors tried various alternatives; others did nothing.

Initiative: The Albanian Pediatric Society decided to devote its 10th annual conference to the unification of guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of the most common serious children's diseases. During the conference, well respected Albanian as well as foreign experts presented epidemiological, clinical and treatment guidelines on how to treat various conditions in children such as acute respiratory tract infections, asthma, dehydration, seizures, certain infections, bacterial meningitis, fever of unknown source, infant nutrition, anemia, acute rheumatic fever, and immunodeficiency. USAID not only subsidized some of the conference costs, but also made it possible to publish the presentations so that pediatricians nation-wide could refer to the up-to-date information contained therein.

Results: Three-hundred and fifty copies of the clinical practice guidelines were published for all the pediatricians in Albania. In towns where doctors often do not have access to the internet, having such a publication to refer to in Albanian is invaluable. Now instead of relying on outmoded guidance or guessing what alternative might be appropriate in the absence of the usual medicine, doctors can refer to the publication and be sure that they are providing the best care under the circumstances.

Pullout Quote: "The new and unified guidelines for pediatricians are serving as a model whereby guidelines will be unified and updated for hospital patients of all ages," explains Georgina Kuli-Lito, head of the Albanian Pediatric Society who spearheaded this initiative.

Albania

Students Enlisted to Tackle Domestic Violence

Training for law students gives 'teeth' to implement law against domestic violence

Challenge: Many good laws are passed in Albania that are not implemented for many reasons. In the case of the law against domestic violence, passed in December 2006 with overwhelming bipartisan support and coming into effect in June 2007, the effort by civil society including the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives made a huge difference. With the help of a grant from USAID, boilerplates of the legal document needed to request protection orders were drawn up and

accepted by the judges and police. These protection orders sent a clear signal to many abusers that they could not exert violence on family members with impunity. At the same time, students of law are looking to gain practical experience during their studies. And with some training and oversight, these pro bono students can learn to offer legal counseling and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

Initiative: Through a second grant from USAID, the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives set out to train 15 students from the second and third year of law to offer free legal counseling. As soon as students heard about the opportunity to participate in practical application of the law, they rushed to sign up. The Center for Legal Civic Initiatives experts developed a special training manual and in the end, nearly twice as many, 27, were trained to assist with such cases and monitor the implementation of the law against domestic violence. The pro bono students also attended workshops in rural areas to help explain the law and what it means for the rights of family members. Finally, a TV spot with the pro bono students was prepared and broadcast on local television.

Results: The TV spot resulted in many more women contacting the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives to receive free legal aid, especially from outside the capital. The pro bono students were there to offer assistance, together with the lawyers of the Center, to hundreds of clients, out of which 21 required protection orders. This is a huge increase over the total of six protection orders issued by courts during the first nine months of the law being on the books. Other clients required assistance to file for divorce, alimony, custody or the enforcement of court decisions. And many just needed psycho-social counseling. Not only did the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives have the students there to respond to the influx of people. The students acquired valuable, hands-on experience in the details of implementing the law. Several have continued to volunteer at the Center and elsewhere, even after their official program finished.

Pullout Quote: “These pro bono students offer an important contribution,” explains Aurela Bozo, Director of the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives. “This pro bono work prepares legal professionals who are more sensitive to the issues of implementing legislation addressing gender-based violence.”

Kosovo

Public Debates Hold New Mayors to Campaign Promises

After Kosovo's first open ballot elections, 27 mayors respond to constituents

Challenge: Kosovo's first open list municipal elections took place in November 2007. Voters and candidates participated actively in public debates leading up to the election. These debates, organized by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), a local non-governmental organization, were well-received, effective, and a strong example of direct democracy in action. However, few mechanisms were in place to track and discuss fulfillment of campaign promises during the mayors' tenure.

Initiative: BIRN followed up several months after local elections with a series of nationally televised debates, called “Life in the Municipality.” The debates provided a forum for citizens to check on progress toward the mayors' campaign promises but the debates required prior research in measuring the one-year performance of mayors in their posts. Through USAID's support BIRN was able to conduct thorough investigative research in the municipalities, which served as an effective mechanism to measure the one-year performance of mayors to be discussed at the municipal public debates.

Results: Reacting to inquiries from BIRN and in anticipation of televised discussion, mayors initiated a flurry of actions on their campaign promises, including a road repair project that began in Deqan/Decani; placement of waste baskets in the village of Bardhosh in Fushe Kosovë/Kosovo Polje; and new desks purchased and brought to a school in Novobërd/Novobrd. In addition, citizens and municipal personnel report generally increased responsiveness on the part of the mayors and local administration. By supporting this initiative, USAID provided citizens of Kosovo with an opportunity to hold their officials accountable against promises and their performance.

Pullout Quote: “In general the mayors are now more conscious of their obligations.” (BIRN)

Kosovo

After School English and Computer Classes Start at Kamenicë/a-Area School

Computer and English language classes started in February 2009 at the Technical School in Veliko Ropotovo/Ropotove e Madhe, Kamenicë/a municipality, as a new computer laboratory opened on February 5 with support from USAID/Kosovo, the municipality and the school. The laboratory will be used for special after-school computer and English language classes for 80 students at the school. The laboratory includes 11 networked computers with internet access and a multimedia projector. The initiative is a partnership of the school, municipality and USAID's Focusing on Result Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) program. The municipality renovated the room and arranged for new desks and chairs. The USAID program will also support teachers in leading the after-school English and computer classes.

The laboratory in Veliko Ropotovo/Ropotove is the sixth laboratory to open in Serbian speaking schools. Other participating schools are in Laplje Selo/Llapllasellë, Partes/Partesh, Vrbovac/Vrbovc, Strpce/Shterpce and Susica/Sushicë. Other laboratories were opened in Kosovo Albanian schools in Lipjan/Lipljan, Viti/Vitina, Istog/Istok, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Deqan/Decan, Ferizaj/Urosevac and Kaqanik/Kacanik. In total, the initiative reaches more than 1,000 students in 13 schools. USAID's FORECAST program is designed to provide training and study opportunities for Kosovars in many areas, and to support Kosovar partner organizations to operate more efficiently and achieve better results. The program is implemented by World Learning.

Kosovo

U.S. Soldiers Train Teachers on Classroom Management

A workshop on Classroom Management was organized for 25 teachers and administrators of primary schools at Camp Bondsteel on February 28, 2009. The participants came from Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb schools in four municipalities -- Ferizaj/Urosevac, Viti/Vitina, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Shtirpce/Strpce. Local teachers learned new techniques in education management and discipline from their American colleagues. The training was conducted by two U.S. Army Captains, educators in their civilian lives, and a professor from the University of Maryland.

The workshop offered an opportunity for Kosovo Forces and local teachers to exchange teaching tips, helped the soldiers build stronger relationships with school staff and reinforced the soldiers' mission of ensuring a safe and secure environment in Kosovo. The workshop was organized jointly by USAID's Focus on Results -- Enhancing Capacities Across Sectors in Transition program (implemented by World Learning) and KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East) at Camp Bondsteel.

Serbia

Bridging Two Countries and Several Cultures

Challenge: Novi Knezevac is a small town in northern Serbia nestled between the Hungarian and Romanian borders. It is a quaint place, rich in natural resources and, owing to its location and Austro-Hungarian and Serbian roots, it boasts a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment. At the same time, its remote location has left it somewhat isolated from the cultural and agricultural centers of Serbia, and its economy is yet to see the benefits of Serbia's chosen European path. Its young people do not have many opportunities to travel and encounter different cultures and have few prospects for finding meaningful employment in their community. This is true of many places in Serbia. Novi Knezevac needs to increase its connections with the outside world, or risk its future by having its best and brightest young people lured to opportunities in bigger cities.

Initiative: The FORECAST Exchange program provides one year undergraduate scholarships at U.S. universities to introduce promising young Serbian students to different aspects of American culture as well as to build professional and personal bridges, thus strengthening understanding between people from different countries and encouraging global perspectives. Exchange students on U.S. campuses also interact with students from other parts of the world. Motivated by his experiences gained during a FORECAST Exchange scholarship, Pavle Jovanov decided upon his return from the U.S. to Novi Knezevac that he wanted to share his experiences with his local community and let them know about other U.S. exchange programs. By organizing a day of events in his hometown with World Learning, USAID, and the American Embassy in Belgrade,

he was able to accomplish just that. On August 27th, 2008, the President of the municipality, municipal officials, and many local citizens officially welcomed back their native son.

Results: The crowd filling the local library listened attentively while Pavle talked about his academic year at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, how he enjoyed his experiences, how it helped him professionally, and how it deepened his appreciation of his own culture. They also heard about other USAID and U.S. Embassy sponsored exchange programs from World Learning and U.S. Embassy staff. The students that attended the presentation were pleased that one of their own had received such a scholarship and had acted as an “Ambassador” for their multi-cultural community. Upon learning about this and another exchange program which bridges cultures on both sides of the Atlantic, Community Connections, other young adults from Novi Knezevac took the steps to apply. At the end of the day, Pavle was pleased that his experiences helped connect Novi Knezevac with the United States and motivated some of his townsfolk to take similar steps.

Pullout Quote: “I was born in Banat, Serbia and that’s home. Right now, my challenge is to go into the world and try to do something there. You have to understand both to compare them. However, I feel it is important to know to come back.” Pavle Jovanov



MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY

USAID Dedicates New Technology for the Kosovo Serb Radio Network

Tina Kaidanow, U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, inaugurated the re-launching of the Kosovo Serbian Media Association (KOSMA) network on Friday, February 13th.

The original radio network was constructed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2004, with microwave technology. However it soon fell into disrepair and was expensive to maintain. Following a detailed survey of the existing system, USAID's Strengthening Independent Minority Media program issued a \$37,400 grant to fund the purchase of equipment that allows member stations to exchange programs live and in stereo over the internet.

Each station has a rack-mounted unit which allows them to send programs and news items to each other, live or pre-recorded, even through low-quality internet connections. They also each have mobile units, with which they can broadcast live from anywhere with an internet connection.



Tina Kaidanow, U.S. Ambassador, learns about the technology provided to the network. Andrew Clayton, Program Director with USAID's Media Program [right], and Nebojsa Vesic, editor with Radio Kllokot [middle].

The five radio stations in the network cover most of the Serbian communities in Kosovo. These communities are very isolated and audience research shows that they turn first to radio for their local news. As Zivojin Rakocevic, news editor at Radio KIM in Caglavica and Chairman of the KOSMA network, says: "With good communication by radio, enclaves are not ghettos."

The executive director of one of the other networked radio stations, Radio Gorazdevac near Peja/Pec, emphasizes the advantages of internet technology, which doesn't need transmission towers on the top of mountains to make it function: "Our work will be much easier with this equipment. If there is a problem we will not have to go to the hills to fix it. Now, everything is possible. We can have more members and bigger programs. One of the things we should discuss is joint marketing, programs that could be a profit for all."

Creating networks for radio and TV stations improves their news-gathering and their profitability. The re-building of the KOSMA network will help all of the stations provide more comprehensive news for their listeners and bigger audiences for their advertisers.

USAID's Strengthening Independent Minority Media is a three-year program administered by IREX.

NGO Registration Office Improvements Initiated

Work to strengthen and streamline operations of the NGO Registration Department has started with the February 6 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The Pristina ceremony marked the start of a partnership between the department and the USAID-supported Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program. The NGO Registration Department serves as a resource and provider of services to Kosovo NGOs.

"We look forward to a very close relationship with the NGO Department in its commitment to become customer centric," said Suzanne Reed, Director of the Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program who, along with Bajram Kosumi, Director of NGO Registration Department, signed the Memorandum of Understanding at the event hosted by the Ministry of Public Services. The program will work in partnership with the department to help it to assess its current organizational systems and identify opportunities for strengthening its service to NGOs.

"We are particularly excited about the development and implementation of an online registration system," Reed said. "This will help streamline the registration process and provide much easier access to those organizations located outside of Pristina."

USAID's Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program is a three-year activity implemented by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC).

The program aims to ensure that Kosovo civil society is an effective and influential partner to government in public decision-making, contributing to an inclusive and democratic Kosovo.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

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The laboratory will be used for special after-school computer and English language classes for 80 students at the school. The laboratory includes 11 networked computers with internet access and a multimedia projector.

The initiative is a partnership of the school, municipality and USAID's Focusing on Result Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) program. The municipality renovated the room and arranged for new desks and chairs. The USAID program will also support teachers in leading the after-school English and computer classes.

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USAID's FORECAST program is designed to provide training and study opportunities for Kosovars in many areas, and to support Kosovar partner organizations to operate more efficiently and achieve better results. The program is implemented by World Learning.

MINORITY OUTREACH

USAID Opens Partner Office in Kosovo Serb Center

The new Gracanica/Gracanice office for USAID and its partner, Academy for Educational Development, was opened at a February 5 reception. The office, located in one of the largest Kosovo Serb cities in southern Kosovo, will serve as a focal point and resource center for all USAID assistance programs to minority communities.



U.S. Ambassador Kaidanow greets guests at the new office for USAID's Initiating Positive Change Program in Gracanica/Gracanice

"This office is a resource for all of you and will provide information on all of the U.S. Government's assistance programs in Kosovo," said Ambassador Kaidanow at the opening ceremony. "It is also a chance to bring new ideas and initiatives to our attention. So, please make full use of this office. We want to hear from you."

In addition to the opening of the office, the event marked the launch of USAID's Initiating Positive Change program, a community mobilization and development activity that aims to help minority communities improve quality of life, create economic opportunities, address security challenges, and develop links with local and national institutions.

U.S. Agency for International Development
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For more information visit www.usaid.gov/missions/kosovo and <http://pristina.usembassy.gov/> or contact us at kosovousaidinfo@usaid.gov



ASSISTING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Kosovo's President Visits USAID-ASU Accounting Scholars

On February 23rd, during his recent U.S. trip, Kosovo's President Fatmir Sejdiu visited Arizona State University (ASU) students from Kosovo who, with support from USAID/Kosovo, are earning advanced accounting degrees. President Sejdiu was in Tempe to receive the university's Distinguished Global Leadership Award. The USAID-supported students are at ASU as part of the USAID/Arizona State University Public/Private Partnership for Accountancy at the University of Prishtina.



Left to right: USAID-supported students Arben Avdiu, Adrian Alo, Visar Peci, and First Lady and President Sejdiu.

ASU is partnering with USAID in a project to strengthen the capacity of the University of Prishtina (UP) to produce accountants familiar with international accounting standards, conversant with standard accounting software, and trained to meet specific the needs of companies working in Kosovo. The project aims to help modernize UP's Faculty of Economics by introducing a new curriculum, which will lead to the opening of an Accounting Department within the Faculty.

The USAID-supported fellows at ASU, in addition to their classes, are designing the curriculum. Upon their return, they will start the new department and teach some of the subjects. Kosovo's current business/economic education system needs modernization in order to provide graduates with the skills needed in increasingly regional and global workforces.

USAID, through its Higher Education Development activities, is addressing the challenge through several university partnerships, including the ASU-UP partnership.

Other Higher Education Partnerships are between UP's Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences and the University of Pittsburgh, and the American University in Kosovo (AUK) and Rochester Institute for Technology.

In 2003, President Sejdiu, then a professor of law at the University of Prishtina, spent a semester in residence at ASU as part of an educational partnership administered by ASU's Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies through a grant from the U.S. Department of State.

Boosting Local Production through Special Loan Fund

A loan to Shalaj Company, a concrete products manufacturer in Istog/Istok, helped the firm overcome electrical supply irregularities and increase production by 150% to meet the growing demand for concrete curbing for highways.

The 100,000 euro loan assisted the company in purchasing an industrial-sized electricity generator, pressurized pallets and two heavy duty trucks, which will help the company respond to the growing demand for road infrastructure improvements. With its own generator, the company was able to add a second production shift, hiring nine new permanent employees.

Shalaj is one of Kosovo's leading producers of concrete curbs for highways and sidewalk/patio blocks. However, Shalaj's ability to produce an adequate supply of roadway curbing and sidewalk blocks was constrained due to the erratic supply of electricity which frequently interrupted the production process.

Improvements to Kosovo's road network are important for the medium-term success of the economy. The movement of commodities and finished products within Kosovo, and trade to and from other countries depends almost entirely on road traffic. However, the existing road infrastructure cannot accommodate traffic of this weight or density, and most of the existing roads are inadequate and/or in poor condition.

The Government of Kosovo is implementing a road construction program that is designed to correct this deficiency with several major arteries in some stage of planning, construction, rehabilitation, or expansion. These include improvements in the routes between Pristina and Macedonia, Albania (with connection to the Albanian Adriatic port Durres), Mitrovice/a and Peja/Pec. All of these roadways require concrete curbs, creating an enormous demand for Shalaj's products.

The loan is part of USAID's Kosovo Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Commercial Finance Fund project, implemented by Crimson Finance Fund, LLC. The four-year project provides new types of short-term working capital financing to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), farmers, women, and minorities across all sectors of the economy.

USAID, which has provided \$700,000 to the fund, is working in cooperation with the Norwegian Government through its NORFUND, which has provided a \$485,000 grant for enterprise start-up costs and a \$1.1 million low-interest loan to be used for lending to local businesses.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Sessions Encourage Greater Transparency and Citizen Participation in Municipal Assemblies

Members of 24 municipal assemblies were trained on ways to improve the transparency of municipal assemblies and to encourage greater citizen participation in municipalities. The training sessions were designed to facilitate dialogue between the municipal assemblies and the Ministry of Local Government Administration. A total of 360 municipal assembly members attended the sessions held throughout Kosovo.

The training sessions, conducted by USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative staff, provided participants with explanations of transparency, anti-corruption and citizen participation as well as current practices necessary to meet municipal legal requirements. Participants presented their municipalities' strategies to increase participation and transparency as municipalities undertake many actions, ranging from the development of the municipal annual budget to planning for a new park.

During small group sessions, many of the participants put the theoretical information into practice, developing specific ideas for situations in their municipalities. Participants were encouraged to undertake concrete steps to implement strategies to increase transparency and citizen participation.

As a part of the training, the participants received the "Handbook on Local Self-Government Law," compiled by USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative. The Effective Municipalities Initiative is a three-year activity to help local governments to improve management and service delivery. The activity is implemented by RTI International.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

U.S. Soldiers Train Teachers on Classroom Management

A workshop on Classroom Management was organized for 25 teachers and administrators of primary schools at Camp Bondsteel on February 28th.

The participants came from Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb schools in four municipalities -- Ferizaj/Urosevac, Viti/Vitina, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Shterpce/Strpce. Local teachers learned new techniques in education management and discipline from their American colleagues. The training was conducted by two U.S. Army Captains, educators in their civilian lives, and a professor from the University of Maryland.



KFOR soldier shows how to use equipment to a trainee

The workshop offered an opportunity for Kosovo Forces and local teachers to exchange teaching tips, helped the soldiers build stronger relationships with school staff and reinforced the soldiers' mission of ensuring a safe and secure environment in Kosovo.

The workshop was organized jointly by USAID's Focus on Results -- Enhancing Capacities Across Sectors in Transition program (implemented by World Learning) and KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East) at Camp Bondsteel.

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